New Jersey

— Basin Boundaries
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the New Jersey 1996 305(b) report, contact:

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Surface Water Quality

Thirty-five percent of the 3,815 surveyed stream miles have good water quality that fully supports aquatic life, but New Jersey's high population density threatens these waters. Bacteria (which indicates unsafe swimming conditions) and nutrients are the most common pollutants in rivers and streams. All of the State's lakes are believed to be either threatened or actively deteriorating. Bacterial contamination is the most widespread problem in estuaries, impairing both shellfish harvesting and swimming. Other problems include nutrients, pesticides, and priority organic chemicals. Major sources impacting New Jersey's waters include municipal treatment plants, industrial facilities, combined sewers, urban runoff, construction, agriculture, and land disposal of wastes (including septic tanks).

Ground Water Quality

Available data suggest that, at present, there is an ample supply of good quality ground water in most of the State of New Jersey. However, ground water quantity (and quality) problems are usually concentrated in areas where the greatest volumes of ground water are needed, such as urban and agricultural areas. Overpumping in these areas has created hydraulic gradients that sometimes result in the recharge of aquifers from undesirable sources such as seawater, polluted surface waters, or severely contaminated ground water.

The most widespread violations of standards for naturally occurring contaminants involve the State's recommended secondary drinking water regulations. These contaminants include iron, total dissolved solids, sulfate, and hardness.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

In 1996, New Jersey was one of five States in the Nation to pilot a mechanism to allow States greater flexibility in addressing their priority environmental problems while reducing Federal oversight if and where appropriate. This mechanism is the National Environmental Performance Partnership System

(NEPPS), which emphasizes environmental management aimed toward results using environmental goals and indicators as measures of progress. The NEPPS process places greater emphasis on scientific assessments of trends in environmental quality and, through the identification of key issues and the setting of priorities, lays the foundation for long-term environmental planning.

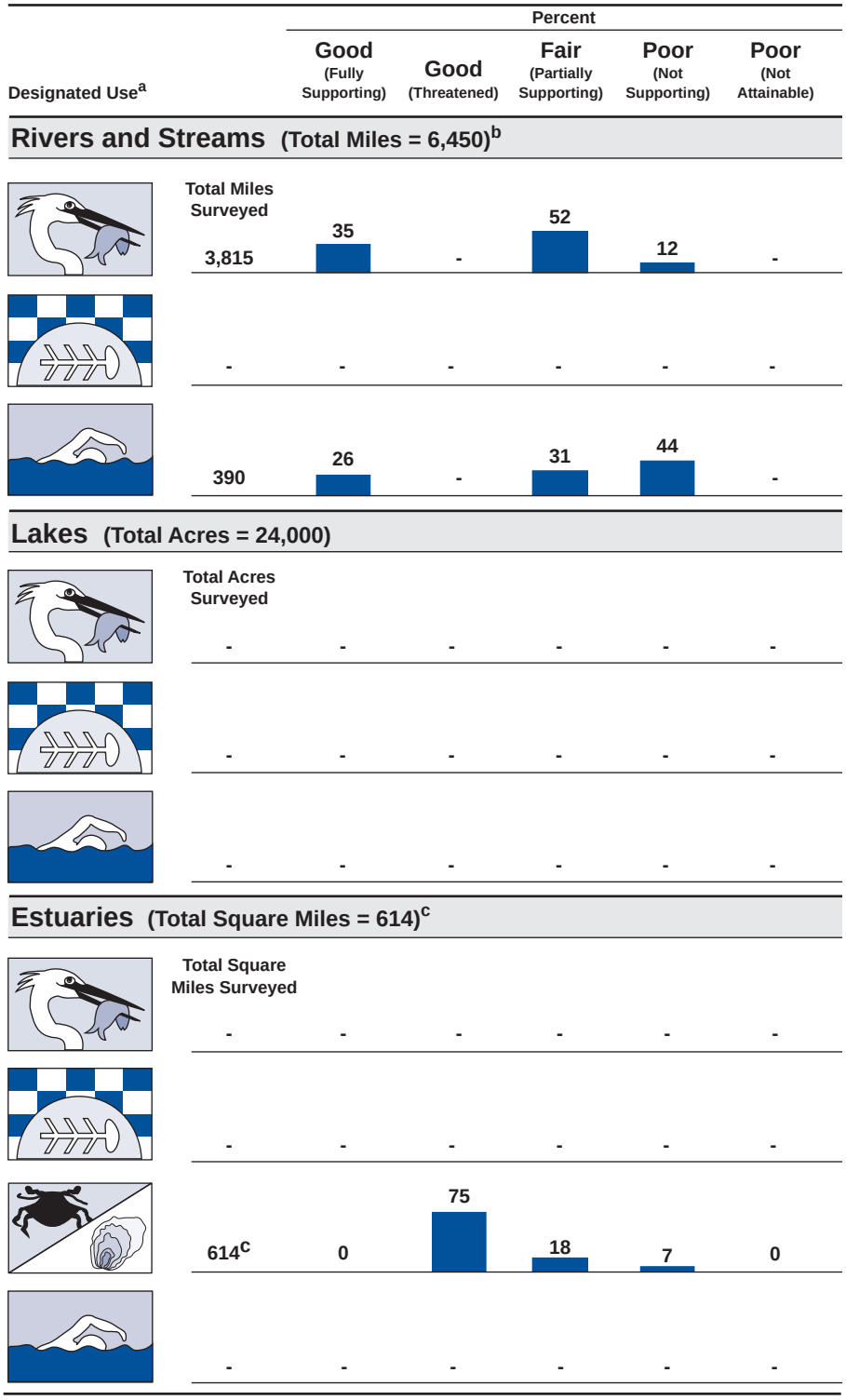
Programs to Assess Water Quality

Ambient chemical monitoring in New Jersey is now extensively supplemented by biological assessments of in-stream benthic macroinvertebrates. From this, evaluations regarding the overall health of in-stream biota are estimated. These biological assessments are useful in directly assessing the aquatic life support designated use, as well as revealing the impact of toxic contaminants and detecting chronic water quality conditions that may be overlooked by ambient chemical sampling. The bioassessments have been performed for all the major watersheds within the State—700 monitoring locations, all located in nontidal portions of rivers and streams.

New Jersey is revamping its chemical monitoring to include both broad-scale long-term continuous monitoring and short-term intensive site-specific assessments.

– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.
[a] A subset of New Jersey's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the State's 305(b) report for a full description of the State's uses.
[b] Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.
[c] Includes tidal portions of coastal rivers.

Individual Use Support in New Jersey



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.